

Introducing a New Orchid to Your Collection

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You've acquired a new orchid, and you're excited to bring it home to your collection. Whether it was a gift from a fellow orchid enthusiast or a purchase from a trusted grower, you'll want to find out everything you can about your new plant from the previous owner: growing conditions, how much water it needs, how and when to fertilize it.

Take a photo of your new acquisition, so that you know how it looked when you received it, and to help you identify any condition issues it may have. Examine it thoroughly for pests, diseases and insects. In case of infestation, you'll want to gently clean both sides of the leaves with a paper towel and non-toxic insecticidal soap.

If the plant is in a clear plastic container, check the roots to see if they are plump and healthy. Check the condition of the medium and make note if it is broken down; you'll need to re-pot the orchid and get rid of dead roots after the plant has become acclimated to its new environment.

The initial photo, with caption, will also help you remember how many leaves and stems the orchid had when it first arrived and track its growth in the months that follow. If your plant did not come with a tag, this is the time to create one which includes date of acquisition, where it came from, and the type of orchid. Consider making two tags and burying one of them deep in the medium, in case the first is lost.

If you purchased your plant by mail, it could be suffering from transport 'jet lag' and may need time to adjust to the local schedule. During this transition, your orchid may seem sickly and lose some of its leaves.

As you are checking the roots, determine if the plant needs water. If it is dry, allow it to soak in a water bath for several hours. Do not place multiple plants to soak simultaneously in the same container because doing so may spread disease. If the plant is too wet, place it in an area where it can dry out. Consider following up with a drench and spray of Physan. Begin a normal watering schedule as soon as possible.

Finally, and most importantly, quarantine your new orchid away from the rest of your collection for at least six weeks while checking it for signs of disease or pests. Treat any condition that you identify, keeping the orchid separate, until you are certain that there is no risk to the other orchids in your collection.

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